## 2007 News Releases

## Permits X-Press – progress made, more work to be done

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### NEWS @ A GLANCE:

The City of Winnipeg, along with representatives from the construction industry, today gave a progress report on the Permits X-Press project - a City-led initiative designed to speed up and improve the permit application process. This is the third time an official project update has been provided to the media and the public on progress.
(for more details, please read the full media release below)

### MEDIA RELEASE:

WINNIPEG January 30, 2007 - The City of Winnipeg, along with representatives from the construction industry, today gave a progress report on the Permits X-Press project - a City-led initiative designed to speed up and improve the permit application process.

"The Permits X-Press project is a step forward on improving customer service and opening the doors to City Hall," said Mayor Sam Katz. "We have a long way to go, but we are making progress. I want to commend the Planning, Property and Development Department and thank the industry volunteers for the improvements that have been made so far, and look forward to working together and improving the way our city does business."

"Improving customer service through the Permits X-press process has been a priority in the Planning, Property and Development Department over the past three years," said Harry Finnigan, Director of Planning, Property and Development. "With the support of our Industry volunteers, we've come a long way in improving our systems and speeding up permit approvals. In fact, we've implemented 57 of the 66 recommended actions in the 2004-2006 Report Card."

Permits X-Press was launched in January of 2004 with an ambitious objective to provide improved customer service to both professional and occasional permit applicants. From the beginning, the Permits X-Press project involved industry members working with the department to find improvements that mattered most to customers.

This is the third time an official project update has been provided to the media and the public on progress. Previous updates were provided in April 2004 and in January 2005.

As well as announcing progress to date, and in acknowledgement of the contribution made by industry representatives, Mayor Katz presented a Permits X-Press award to John Woods of Woods Engineering. John joined the Permits X-Press Industry Advisory Group at its inception, as the representative of the Consulting Engineers of Manitoba. John actively participated in setting priorities for the first Permits X-Press Project Report Card, in providing support and advice on the implementation of the many improvements, and brought the concerns and perspectives of the Consulting Engineers to the table.

Mayor Katz also presented awards of recognition to organizations who have

contributed their ideas through the Industry Advisory Group.

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**Backgrounder – Progress Report- January 30, 2007**

- List of Permits X-Press Phase III process improvements
- Priorities for Phase IV

**Phase III improvements announced today include:**

- **A New Business Development Administrator** position ...created to facilitate, mediate and expedite large, complex and unique development and permit applications.
- **Spring 2007 Implementation of the Building Design Summary** ... a comprehensive checklist for commercial new construction and addition projects that outlines all application requirements in one document - to assist permit applicants in providing all the information required in order to process applications more quickly.
- **Introduction of Codes training for design professionals** – curriculum created jointly by industry and the City and delivered by Red River College
- **Fast track permit** programs and results...for straightforward jobs with complete information, customers can receive their permit within:
    - 6 days for Master Plan Homes
    - 6 days for Engineered Homes
    - 5 days for detached garages, hot tubs with decks
    - 1 day for above ground pools, hot tubs, garage packages and wood burning appliances, plumbing, and electrical permits
- **Red Tape Commission Recommendations** – Recommendations relating to building permits and development processes are being addressed as per Council direction. Accomplishments to date include:
    - **Recommendation 12 – Streamline permit process overall to expand on successes**
        - Elimination of permit requirement for decks 2 feet and
        - Elimination of permit requirement for temporary tents under 901 square feet
        - Implemented quick turnaround time for low risk permits including decks, detached garages, pools, hot tubs, Occupy Only
    - **Recommendation 13 – Improve the Public Notification Process**
        - Report approved by Council January 24, 2007
        - Implementation will include new look public notices written in plain language, large format signs for sites located on high-speed traffic corridors, and an interactive web page for information on public notices, accessible by neighbourhood
- **Customer satisfaction surveys** -
    - A contractor and developer survey conducted in 2006 indicated that 83% of respondents had observed improvements to the permits service in the last six months, up from 70% in 2004.
    - An ongoing web-based survey of customers in all permit categories will commence in the second quarter of 2007.
- **Accountability** - Permits X-Press Report Card - our online report card shows that we have implemented 57 of the 66 recommended actions outlined in the 2004-2006 Report Card. (www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/)

- **Association support for the Permits X-Press Project** continues through the Industry Advisory Group, comprised of representatives from the organization most affected by the permits process. Two new associations have joined the Group – the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA).

**Permits X-Press - Phase IV next steps:**

- **Six priority areas identified**
  - Continued improvements to the Building Permits process
  - Improvements to the Land Development Applications process
  - Continued implementation of related Red Tape Recommendations
  - Staff training in process improvement
  - Enhanced measurement and monitoring framework
  - Communication and reporting process
- A new Report Card to track progress on the six priorities
- A **joint public education strategy** (Industry Advisory Group and City) emphasizing the importance and benefits of obtaining building permits

*Last update: 30.01.2007*

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